

# Questions to Ask

When talking to long distance companies who want your business, you should ask a few questions:

- Will the new company pay the switching fees?
- What is the billing increment? Is it per minute, three-minutes, etc.? If you talk for 20 seconds do you pay for 3 minutes?
- Are there monthly service fees or minimum charges?
- Are you charged for unanswered calls?
- Is this rate a short term program?
- Do you have to sign a long-term contract to get the good rates?

**Always check your billing closely for correct rates or unauthorized charges.**



## Fact or Fiction?

### Long Distance Advertising



#### **South Dakota Public Utilities Commission**

State Capitol Building  
500 East Capitol  
Pierre SD 57501

Call: 1-800-332-1782

Fax: (605) 773-3809

Website: <http://www.state.sd.us/puc/>

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## What to Compare

### PRICE

- **Monthly fees:** If an ad promises a very low rate per minute, ask if there are monthly fees or surcharges in addition to the rate.
- **Minimum charges:** Ask if there are minimum charges. For example, on "up to 20 minutes for 99¢" plans may charge you 99¢ for a one minute call.
- **Climbing Rates:** If the "20 minutes for 99¢" sounds good, ask what the rate is after 20 minutes.



### RESTRICTIONS

- **Time restrictions:** Ask if the rates apply only at certain times of the day. Do the rates apply only on certain days of the week? What are the rates at other times?
- **Geographic restrictions:** Does the rate apply to all long distance calls? Does it apply only on out-of-state calls?
- **Promotional restrictions:** Are the rates offered for a limited time? Will rates automatically increase within 60 days? If so, what will the rate be after the promotion?

### COMPARATIVE CLAIMS

- **Basic Rates:** Ads offering "50% lower than our basic rate" may not be a good deal. Basic rates are usually the highest rate of a company.
- **Comparable Services:** If a company indicates that their rates are much lower than their competitors' rates, they may be comparing their lowest rates to the competitor's highest rates. Is the company using the most current rates offered by their competitor?

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